

A
GATE
OF
CEDAR

KATHARINE
MORSE



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A GATE OF CEDAR



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TORONTO

A GATE OF CEDAR

BY
KATHARINE MORSE

Author of
"The Uncensored Letters of a Canteen Girl"

New York

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THIS BOOK
IS
DEDICATED
TO
MY MOTHER

The Shuamite and *Verses for a Guest Room*
appeared in the Century Magazine under
the pen name "Anne Arrabin."

FOREWORD

I PIPE not to the world,
For it were bold of me
To think that such a one as I
Could pipe for others' glee :

For some have pipes of gold
And some of mellow brass ;
My pipe is but a hollow reed
Bound with a blade of grass.

Some pipe to courts and kings,
Some to the crowding mart ;
But I, I pipe not to the world,
I pipe to my own heart.

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A GATE OF CEDAR

MAPLE TREE

Now fall mints gold from out the green of June;
Golden as honey in the comb,
Pagan and perfect as some temple dome
My maple burns against the blue of noon.

Under its shining shade I lie and gaze
Up through dark branches veining amber tints
Over whose arch the gold light gleams and glints
Lovely as lacquer, lucent as old glaze;

Till, lying so, I dream there drips
Wine and wild honey on my lips.

MY GARDEN

My garden is a harlequin,
With careless colors tumbled in;
And neither proper beds nor rows
But every gipsy flower that grows;
Larkspurs and blazing stars and phlox,
Petunias and hollyhocks,
And marigolds and feverfew
And champions and four-o'clocks;
Scarlets and blues and pinks and corals
With every saucy scent and hue . . .
And should you comment; Such a garden
Is little suited, by your pardon,
To our New England modes and morals,
Pray tell me then the reason of it!
I'll only say; The wild bees love it,
And what the bees love, I love too.

AUTUMNAL

RUST on the field and on the thicket,
A cicada, a shrilling cricket,
Wild apples from a hill-side bough
With skin like flame and flesh like snow,
With chestnuts brown and warm and sleek
And shining as an Arab's cheek,
Grapes garlanding a twisted vine,
The sumachs ruddy as red wine,
And under sharp October skies
Your sunburnt smile, your gipsy eyes!

BUMBLEBEE

IN a satin chamber
I surprised a bee
Tippling draughts of amber
From cup of porphyry.

With buccaneer bravado
The velvet debauché
Booms blustering defiance,
Then swaggers it away.

COLORS

No color is so glad as green;—
When the full flood of April shakes
The world and each bud stirs and wakes
Amid the woods where woodland lakes
Shine bright as bluebells in between;
Or when June quickens and the rye
Lies tender-hearted to the sky,
Or when the young maize shoulder-high
Takes from the light a shifting sheen:

If God should say to me; Now choose
Which hue to keep since you must lose
All colors from the earth but one:

I'd say; Dear God, I would regret
The hyacinth and violet,
The cowslip brimmed with morning sun,
The phantom rainbow and the mist
At dawn of pearl and amethyst;
And may I die ere I forget
The blue of yonder hill-top,—yet
God, give me green!

AWAKENING

THE dawn is a kiss on my face . . .
I throw wide the dark door of night,
I leap to the day's embrace,
I give myself to the light.

THE SHRIVING

BENEATH a breaking sky
Amid the wild grass, I
Have shrived myself anew ;
Austere, immaculate, withdrawn,
The Angel of the Dawn
Has pierced my naked heart with light
And sealed my brow with dew.

ON THE HILL-TOP

FROM the cup of the sky
With lips long starved
I drink the blue dawn,
Unafraid;
While in my hands
I hold the earth,—
A sphere of green jade
Curiously carved.

A SUNSET

FISH

Silver

Luminous

Lazily poised ;

Foam streaks

Of far-off ships :

Tides

Amber

Fathomless ;

Dark waves

Brooding of storm

Eclipse.

TWILIGHT

DUSK the grey reaper gathers in
The golden harvest of the sky;
Thin and more thin
The failing color shows:
Retarded in its flight
As by a Titan's touch
The rhythm of the light
Perceptibly now slows:
The old earth, tired and spent
And having suffered much,
Yet happily content,
Turns with a drowsy sigh
Its slow cheek to the night.

IN THE ORCHARD

THERE are no hours more gold than these
Beneath the autumn apple trees,
When every laden twig and bough
Is bright with fruit like colored flames:
If I were but a poet now
I'd make a sonnet of their names:

There's *Belle Fleur Jaune* and *Belle et Bonne*,
Wonder and *Duke of Wellington*,
Arkansas Baptist and *Louise*,
Victuals and *Drink* and *Bread* and *Cheese*,
With *Texas Pride*, *Kentucky Queen*
And *Salome* and *Magdalene*,
Gloria Mundi, *Gillyflower*
With *Winter Wine* and *Sweet and Sour*.

Scarlet and gold I count each one
From *Maiden's Blush* to *Jonathan*,
And each is lovelier than the rest;
I do not know which one is best.

BIRDS

A BLUEBIRD in an apple tree
A glad adventure is to me;

While, sudden glimpsed, the swallow's dart
Like laughter flicks across my heart;

Grey-shadowed gulls with wide blown wings
Wake in me vagrant hankerings;

A silver thrush at dusk of day
Calls from dim woods and then I pray.

HUMMING-BIRD

THE fashion of the humming-bird;—
At soul blithe bee,
Caught in a case of Cloisonné
From oversea;

A little whiff of Orient
In prim New England morn,
To vex the heart with Araby
And leave forlorn;

A vagrant note of scarlet joy
That bell and book should ban,
A bit of pagan pageantry
To flout the puritan.

THRASHER

THE thrasher in my aspen tree
Has set his sleek brown throat a-bubble;
The drollest scamp of lovers, he
To court by code will take no trouble;
He flouts his sweetheart while he woos,
Cajoles, caresses, spites and teases,
Then all at once croons, coaxes, coos;
He plays with moods just as he pleases,
A puckish, now a poignant, note,
Some whimsy of a waggish wit,
Then all Arcadia in his throat;
I can but sense the drift of it,
For mortal wits at best are thick
When love's a-brewing,—more's the pity!
But this is clear; Sweet, Sweet, come quick!
Come merrily, my Pretty, Pretty!

CROW

A GENTLEMAN, sedate, severe,
In black habiliments monastic,
Of sombre mien and speech austere,—
To dub him robber were fantastic!

Indeed his solemn cawings say;
Nine flies and five fat slugs each day
Suffice for my ascetic diet:—
What did I hear you mutter? Corn!
I will not trouble to deny it!
Such slanders best are met with scorn!

Pax tecum, friend, I must be flying;
The hour grows late. What's that you say?
The Blacksmith's old white mare is dying?
The Deacon's early garden's sprouting?
Thanks, I'll be going by that way;
Caaa caw! We'll settle this past doubting.

CHICKADEE

You wee grey gamin of a bird,
Shy, daring, curious, alert,
Pranking in antic airs absurd,—
An arrant flirt!

Frequenter of our winter boughs
In garb as staid as any Quaker,
A bit of cricket and of mouse
Went to your making, merry-maker!

You darting, starting little bobbin!
Our snow-bound days it seems delight you,—
More venturesome than wren or robin,—
Bless you, you saucy little sprite, you!

THE OAK TREE

WITH the wind I awoke
In the night,
Lying huddled and warm
Harkening to the storm;
Sudden I sat upright,
Beat on the dark with a cry,
Knowing that you my own

Mighty and steadfast oak
Were fallen, were overthrown. . . .
Now in the dark I lie
Watching the altered day
Dawn in an empty sky.

A BEE SETS SAIL

THE wind blows east, the wind blows storm,
And yet this very hour
I saw a bumblebee embark
In frigate of a flower ;

An admiral in epaulets,
He strode the scented deck
And in the teeth of tossing gales
He rode without a wreck.

More valorous adventurer
I never hope to see,—
Though mariners be gallant men,—
Than that same bumblebee.

THE SUMACHS

Fall

WIDE-flocking birds of scarlet flame
In Orient imaginings
Which yet no cage could hold or tame . . .
I do not dare draw near
Lest there should suddenly arise
A blinding tumult of great wings
Whirled upward with strange tropic cries.

THE SUMACHS

Winter

GREY with the cold
They shiver bare and stark,
Yet holding each aloft
Insistently, defying,
A crimson torch
Whereof the spark
Is dying.

FOG

Berkeley

THE wings of the fog have brushed the barren
hill-tops,—

White wings poised and hovering on high!—
Swift wings soar and sweep across the heavens,
The wings of the fog have blotted out the sky!

The wings of the fog are brooding close above
us,—

White, white, white like a great flag unfurled!—
The wings of the fog have filled the air with blind-
ness,

The wings of the fog have covered all the world!

BLITHE BIRD BOLD BEE

BLITHE bird, bold bee
Be tolerant of me;
Flit near
Blue Chevalier
Of beechwood tree.

Swift dragon-fly,
No alien I!
Mine host,
Almost,
In inns of sky.

Thrush, robin, wren,
Greet ye again!
Brave company!
To me
My countrymen.

WINTER IN THE SOUTH

THE north land, the home land,
Ah God! If I were there!
Just to see the pointed pines
And steepled cedars growing . . .
A cold air and a keen air
And the snow
Blowing.

OUT OF THE PAST

*Rhymes Written Concerning
Certain Personages and Events
in New England History*

THE REGICIDE

DEEP are God's ways, passing man's little wit,
His wisdom as His grace is infinite:
His will be done; though by His will I live
Exiled, an outcast and a fugitive,
Destined through all my wanderings to spread
Danger like pestilence, to eat the bread
Of charity in secret, yea almost
Living among the living like a ghost,
Shut from the good green earth, shut from the
sky,
A dweller in dark rooms, until I die.

His will be done! Have I not done His will?
Vengeance is mine, He saith; *Thou shalt not kill*.
Yet for the sake of England,—England's fate
Hung in the balance while the seed of hate
Sprang to red war and he who wrought it so,
Tyrant and traitor, murderer and foe
Of England's weal, faithless and false, a thing
More like a wanton woman than a king,

Ruled in a bitter and a cruel reign
And lied and swore and broke his oaths again.

And so I judged him, yea and put my name
On the death warrant, witnessing the same. . . .
The great axe cleft the air, the false head fell . . .
England! O proud land loved and served too well!
What dooms great hearts have undergone for her!
Yet fond and fickle, foolish like the cur
Returning to his vomit, purged in vain,
She bows beneath the tyrant's yoke again!

So God disposes of what man has planned;
The shadows shift and lengthen and the sand
Runs from the hour-glass. We are doomed and
driven,
Vessels without a compass. I have given
All for this one small bitter boon of life . . .
And thou, brave heart, O well-belovéd wife,
A friendless wilderness, a savage sea
Cry dumb denial betwixt thee and me!
Day follows day, so age creeps on apace,
And I shall die and never see her face . . .

Never to see her face nor England's shore,
Green as the garden of the Lord, once more,—
England and all life's stately ordered ways,
England and all the splendor of past days!
But for me rather endless exile spent
In hiding on an uncouth continent,
Until my days, like dark birds that have flown,
Are told and I die nameless and alone.

Lord, who hast deigned, to compass Thy intent,
To make of me an humble instrument,
Be merciful to me a sinner and instil
Thy peace within my heart; have I not done Thy
will?

THE WITCH

So please your Worship, I'm not doing any harm!
An old lame dame, her basket on her arm,
Hobbling along the rutted road by hitches,
Hunting for herbs beside the weedy ditches.
Spells, did you say? God's mercy! my poor jaws
Are fit for nothing but an old wife's saws.
You heard me mutter? Aye! some foolish words
Between me and my gossips here, the birds,—
Wee saucy merry rascals, cock and hen!
He roves abroad,—a way with gentlemen!—
She sits at home, snug in the thorn-tree boughs,
And plays the prude and keeps his little house.

Who's coming yon? Eh! who but Parson Jones!
May the flesh rot from off his marrow bones!
"Doddering old scald crazy crone," he said.
Eh well! Eh well! Some night he'll lie abed
'Twixt dark and cockcrow feeling fifty pins
Pricking his lean hide and his scrawny shins.
Then there's that Goody Boltwood and her brat,
She did me spite, the slut! She'll pay for that!

Eh hey! Perhaps I know a thing or two
Some folks would give a-plenty if they knew!
And my old rheumy eyes have seen some sights!
What would you say, along o' moonshine nights
When proper folk are snoring sound to see,
Down in the Black Swamp by the willow tree,
The devil, fiddle under chin,
Fiddling away as gay as sin
In a high cocked hat and scarlet hose;
While seventeen imps with thumbs to nose
Go spinning, kicking heels and toes
Till one's that giddy goodness knows!

What's that you say? A witch? Now Heaven
forfend!

I'm a poor woman, sir, that's near her end,
And an old tongue does sometimes play queer
tricks.

Eh! Give a dog a bad name and it sticks.

DAN KELLOG ENTERTAINS SHAY'S ARMY

WE'RE Shay's men, fighting men, and we want
rum;
We're dry, dry as cinders and we'll drink till
Kingdom come;
Shutesbury and Petersham, Pelham Hill and
Hollow,
We're ranting roaring rebels, sir! and Shay's the
man we follow!

Here Tom Conkey sings solus

*Old man Kellog was a toper and a Tory,
He swore by the crown and he lived on gin and
glory,
He drank to the King and he blessed his soul;
They came to tar and feather him, he hid him in
a hole;
He took his boots and Bible and went to win the
war;
Up with your bumpers boys and toast our host
once more!*

Long-legged stiff-necked lean punkin-heads,
There's neither man nor devil, sir! that any of us
dreads!

Rough ready roisterers hailing from the hills,
Every musket has its ball every bullet kills;
We're sick of courts and lawyermen and laws and
all such bunk,

And some of us are sober but most of us are
drunk:

We've had one revolution and we've only just
begun,

We've had one revolution,—s'blood, we'll have
another one!

For we're Shay's men, fighting men, full of rum
and sin,

We'll lick the whole damn continent and drink
up all the gin;

Shutesbury and Petersham, Pelham Hill and
Hollow,

Up with your bumpers, boys! Shay's the man to
follow!

STEPHEN BURROUGHS DEFENDS HIMSELF

AGAINST ALL SLANDERERS, TRADUCERS AND
MALICIOUS TONGUES

*Alias Davis . . . rascal . . . ripe for hell . . .
The noted Stephen Burroughs . . . preacher,—
Well?*

*Scalawag, schoolmaster, vagabond of sorts,
Pilloried, whipped, fined in a dozen courts,
Old Parson Burroughs' son and life-long grief,
Jail-bird, imposter, counterfeiter, thief!
Without defender and without a friend,
Foredoomed to hang! Sirs, have you made an
end?*

Such titles so unsparingly conferred
Disprove themselves. Admitting I have erred,
Which of you, gentlemen, dare cast a stone?
To err is human, have I erred alone?

To itemize the charge . . . that coining scheme . . .
I was the dupe, betrayed by that old dream

Of turning dross to gold,—a luckless quest
 Which history assures us has obsessed
 The minds of wise men since King Solomon,—
 Helvetius, Sendevogius, Pope John;
 And where such worthy precedents exist
 Proving the status of the alchemist,
 Is it so strange that, guileless of deceit,
 I fell the victim of a cunning cheat?

Touching the matter of those sermons now,—
 A trifling matter, faith! for such a row!
 Whether myself had written them or not,
 They had their brimstone served them just as hot!
 Mean-minded busybones, they got their dues!
 Thinking to trap me with their text; “Old shoes
 And clouted on their feet.” Ill-doomed intent!
 I preached their sermon! Waxing eloquent,
 I proved *they* were the wearers of the shoes, the
 clouts
 Were envies, jealousies, suspicions, doubts;
 With such sleek sophistries as parsons use,
 Leaving them dumb, condemned by their own
 shoes!

52 STEPHEN BURROUGHS DEFENDS HIMSELF

Jail-bird? In sooth! And yet who needs be taught
Five greater rogues go free for each wretch
caught?

Judges are blind, the law is halt and lame,
Lawyers are lies and justice but a name?
Again, if you should urge that I perchance
Have strayed in paths of sinful dalliance;
What heart so cold but knows the charms of love,
As witness,—Caesar, Alexander, Jove!

Time passes, sirs, when all is done and said,
We live, we sin, we suffer, we are dead;
And just to prove I don't do things by half,
See, I have written my own epitaph;
Stephen etcetera, student of arts,
A mind of talent and a man of parts,
Slandered, maligned, misrepresented,
One who has erred yet much repented,
A gentleman, a scholar and a wit . . .
Too long, you say? Then just write:—counter-
feit!

THE PRIVATEERS

SLOOP from Magadore with ebony and gum,
Schooner from San Salvadore loaded down with
 rum,
Merchantman from Africa with ivory and gold,—
Ho! she'll bring a pretty price when her cargo's
 sold!

Blow us south to Rio Grande, blow us east to
 Spain,
Blow us north to Newfoundland and blow us
 back again.
Here's a buss for Peg and Meg and Moll, the
 pretty dears,
Every lass in every port who loves the privateers!

Schooner from the Indies with silks to dress a
 queen,
Lumber boat with beaver skins bound for Aber-
 deen,
Barque from Demerara with indigo and dyes,
Malaga and Trinidad to make a Yankee prize.

*Run the colors up the mast, warn her with a shot,
By the Lord, she's British, boys, give it to her hot!
Half the game is Yankee aim, half is Yankee luck;
Round shot, grape shot,—Glory ho! She's struck!*

Ho! Blow us south to Rio Grande, blow us east
to Spain,
Blow us north to Newfoundland and blow us
back again!
Here's a buss for Nell and Belle and Poll the
pretty dear,
Where's the lass in any port but loves a privateer?

THE PIONEER'S THOUGHTS TURN EAST

ON the far hill-side in the spring
I drove the grey team harrowing,
When like a cry within my breast
A word thrilled through me;—*west, west, west!*
It rang and rang and would not still
Though I would plough, though I would till,
To whatsoever task I turned
That thought still bit in me and burned . . .

Ah God! my little hill-side farm
Green pastured in the east,
Low roofed with long sheds sheltered warm,
Smooth fare for man and beast;
At dusk I see within my mind
Just how the long light falls
On the low-mounded hills behind
And on the old stone walls . . .

And I who put this back of me
Must watch strange seasons bring
Their arid fruits, and friendless see
The alien face of spring.

GETTYSBURG

How can I bear it? Well the question's fair,
Yet life must answer it, I sometimes think
That God himself can't know what women bear.
Reach me that skein of wool, Dear. No, the pink;
The rose against the purple makes it rich;
And still we go on sewing, stitch by stitch,
While summer ripens with a scent of box
Along the borders belled with hollyhocks,
The fledglings from the eaves will soon be
 flown,—
And still God lets this wicked war go on!

You never saw my sons, you say? That's true,
You didn't come to town till sixty-two . . .
John is the elder one, the younger, Paul,
Is dark and slight while John is fair and tall,
Grey-eyed, with hair the color of ripe corn;
I was just turned nineteen when John was born.

Paul was an ailing child, I used to fear
Each spring he wouldn't see another year;

But John was strong and hearty. So they grew,
And they were all the world to me,—these two!
Then Andrew died, the fall of forty-seven;
John was thirteen, Paul going on eleven,—
Two little heedless happy lads, half-grown,—
And I was left to care for them alone.

Only a mother knows with what heartache
From dark to dawn a mother lies awake.
John was a comfort, to be counted on,—
No woman ever had a better son!
But Paul was contrary and proud and wild
And passionate and wilful from a child,
With eyes that flashed and hair just like a girl's,
Silky and thick and soft,—I kept those curls!
Always the two of them were falling out,
I don't know what their quarrels were about,
Only if John liked red then Paul liked blue;—
And yet they loved each other. . . . So they
grew
From boys to men and I began to fear
The day when they would find some other woman
dear.
John played the friend, was kind but never cared;

I was his only sweetheart, he declared,
And he would never have another one, but all
The pretty girls were making eyes at Paul.

Then the war threatened . . . broke. . . . Night
after night
They argued; North and South and wrong and
right,—
I think Paul took the South's side out of spite.

Well that's my story; you may guess yourself
What happened after; on the mantel shelf
There, side by side, stand pictures of my two;
Paul is the one in grey while John wears blue.

See! it is almost finished, just this row
And then the corner. Women sew and sew
And talk of trifles; why the hens don't lay
And when the drought will break. The papers say
That a great battle has been fought
At Gettysburg. Oh, we are tamed and taught
To live by little things from day to day.

A letter? . . . With bad news, you say . . . Be
quick!

Tell me the worst! My boys are wounded? . . .
sick?

Not dead! . . . Not he! . . . Not Paul, my little
son!

Oh Christ! If it had only been the other one!

FOR ANY LOVER

PRELUDE

SPRING like a white flame has swept o'er
The hearts of lovers;
They that loved before
Are new enkindled as from hazel covers,
Delirious, the floods of love-song pour.

And those that knew not love? Ah! they
Are pitiful indeed!
For none may say
What measure of dim longing is their meed,
Faint troublous tenderness and thoughts astray.

They see the glad leaf leaping from the seed,
Yet feel no stir:
The rune they cannot read;
They sense the young sap surge through pine and
 fir,
Yet know not what they need:

But, piteous in wistful wondering,
Till, sudden-wise,
They turn and kiss and cling;
Then look upon the world with altered eyes
And,—startled,—know the meaning of the spring.

THE DREAMER

AH! dreams, dreams, dreams,
Ye are the heart of me!
The white ships melt in the mistland
At the shadowy verge of the sea,
And where they go I do not know
Nor what their names may be;
Ah! dreams, dreams, dreams,
Ye are the heart of me!

PREMONITION

I DREW the curtains of my heart,
I closed the shutters tight;
Then searched and stopped each cranny
In dread of that great light
Which should assault its casements;
Then, safe from sharpest ray,
Defied in stricken darkness
The miracle of day!

HE TROUBLES ME

HE troubles me; I cannot sleep;
While dark of night fades into dim
I can do naught but wake and weep
Because of him, because of him.

He troubles me; I cannot smile,
For when I would mine eyelids swim
And all the world goes dark a while
Because of him, because of him.

He troubles me; I cannot pray;
I fear the jealous seraphim
That guard my dreams are flown away
Because of him, because of him.

LOVE'S ADVENT

I THOUGHT to hear high silver trumpets blown
Across the world to warn me Love drew near
And thrill my heart with rapture and with fear;
So harkening, heedless of One long known,
Till on a day I woke to find him grown
Close to my heart, inestimably dear;
Then when I thought Love's voice at last to hear
Just with a look he claimed me for his own.

LOVE'S DAWN

I WAS not unaware . . .
For tears had touched my eyelids while I slept;
I woke and found them wet upon my hair,—
I knew it was for no light thing I wept.

I rose and clad me in my whitest gown,
Through the hushed hallways silently I crept,
And still the strange slow tears fell softly down;
Still must I weep yet knew not why I wept.

I turned the blind key in the creaking lock,
I drew the door wide with a shaken hand,
I had not heard his step nor known his knock,
Yet on the threshold I beheld him stand:

Beneath the shadow of his wings I knelt,
He took my hands within his own and drew
My breast against his bosom, straight I felt
His tears against my cheek and then I knew.

THE SHADOW

I COULD not stay to bind my hair,
I could not stop to smooth my dress;
There was no moment to prepare
So sudden was the blessedness.

This thought struck sharp through all the sweet;
The stains upon my garment's hem,
The dust upon my toil-worn feet,
Alas! what will he think of them?

Oh Love, my Love, I grieve with shame,
My heart is shaken with distress,
I am so bitterly to blame
For this;—my life's unreadiness!

He smiled and spoke; "Thy garment's hem
Shines as if woven star on star;
Thy feet"—he knelt for kissing them—
"Are whiter than a seraph's are."

I DARE NOT TELL

I DARE not tell my love for thee aloud,
So worship thee in dumbness, O Most Dear!
For deep within my thought there wears a fear;—
That I in speaking love should spin its shroud.

Yet when my shaken fingers brush thy hand
Or when my thrilled lips tremble on thy cheek,—
This wounding wonder that I may not speak,—
Heart of my Hope, wilt thou not understand?

THE TRYST

LAST night I held a tryst
With my Old Self who died
Three days ago. I drew her close and kissed
Her wistful lips, whereat she, wonder-eyed
And shaken; *Who art thou?*
Dost know me not, O sister mine?
Nay, thou canst be no kin to me!
Lean nearer, look; dost know me now?
Aye, but—how strange! Your hands . . . they
shine!
They shine for they have lain in his.
What makes that light about your brow?
A kiss.
Ah! I have dreamed,—I know!
But not that it would be like this!

FOR THEE

FOR thee my soul puts on her morning face
And festal robes; then through her dwelling-place
Hastens, the quick breath panting to her lips,
And,—prodigal!—lights all her tallow dips
Until the dim abode is starred with light
And all who pass may know; the King comes here
tonight!

NOW YOU ARE SLEEPING

Now you are sleeping I'd send my heart to you
With laden fingers, phantom-light, to strew
Blossoms of balm across your bitter breast;
And on your brow bruised petals wet with dew
And on your anguished eyelids herbs of rest.

AFFIRMATION

DEAF, I would no less tremble to your voice;
Blind and a dweller in strange lands,
There still would surge through me sharp singing
 joys
At touch of your strong hands:

Dumb, I would answer to your word of love;
Dead and forgotten underneath the sod,
If you set foot upon the turf above
Your step to me would be the step of God.

THE SHULAMITE

*I am black . . . But comely! . . . O ye daughters
of Jerusalem,
As the tents of Kedar! . . . As the curtains of
Solomon!*

The Song of Songs

From out the misted margent of dead years
I saw a masque of regal women move,
And some were pale, some passionate with tears,
While others smiled; these were the Queens of
Love.

Out of the mists they moved in stately wise,—
Purple and gold upon each garment's hem,—
And looked at me aloof with alien eyes
Who let them go and spoke no word with them:
So passed, till suddenly I was aware
Of one who moved among the sandaled throng
Barefoot, a wreath of grape bloom in her hair,
And lips that seemed to tremble with stilled song;
On her young limbs a golden hue of sun

That pallid made appear the beauties white,—
Fairer than all the Queens of Solomon!—
Who art thou Loveliest? The Shulamite.

The cinctured Queens in silent scorn depart.
Tarry Belovéd, we are one at heart!

KISS ME

Kiss me as if you were afraid
That what you craved might be gainsaid,
As if, quite recklessly, you tried
At venture, fearful lest denied,
And thus but gained a moment's bliss
At peril of displeasure,—kiss!

Kiss me as if you knew not yet
How wholly I am yours; forget
For just one moment that you know
Both heart and soul are yours; ah! so
As if you scarce dared dream that this
Were possible to happen,—kiss!

Kiss me as if you were not sure
This love of mine would long endure,
As if you deemed that all delay
Were dangerous to loving, yea,
As if you did not dare to miss
One moment while love lasted,—kiss!

THE NEW MOON

Slavic Love Song

ROUND is your rim, O moon, like the curve of my
bosom,
Yet are you pointed and sharp like a blade of fine
metal;
I will stretch out my hand and take you and slip
you beneath my bodice,
When my lover embraces me, between my breasts
he will feel your coldness;
And should he disdain me, with you I will pierce
his heart.

FANCY'S GARDEN

HOLLYHOCK;
Sixteen, a muslin frock,
Petticoats, pinafore,
Sewing a seam;
Sun at the cottage door,—
Does she smile, does she dream?
Heigh-ho, it's four o'clock,
Come skim the cream!

Marigold;
Tropic eyes black and bold,
Earrings of yellow brass;
What will my fortune be,
Gipsy lass, gipsy lass?
Beauty, brave lovers three,
A grave by the cypress tree . . .
The coin falls to the grass . . .

Trumpet vine;
Banners fly bright as wine,
Crimson the bugles blare,

Red beat the throbbing drums,
All the folk run and stare;
Heart, heart, be wise, beware!
Why should he care?

Mignonette;
Dear, leave me not as yet!
Love me in gentle mood,
Love me in solitude:
Draw close the curtain's fold,
Shut out the careless street;
Will love grow ever cold?
Love is so sweet!

Columbine;
Scarlet lips mocking mine,
Scarlet skirts all a-blow;
Where's my love Pierrot?
Once he loved Pierrette,
Now she's grown thin . . .
Ah, how these men forget!
Harlequin . . . Harlequin!

Passion Flower;
Cloisters, a shadowed hour,
A nun in a purple hood;
Why must she pray so long
When she is so good?
Prayers for true lovers dead,
Prayers for those soon to be,—
Saint, when your prayers are said,
Say one for me!

THE FEAR

MAKE me, Most Dear, to love you less,
Lest I should lean on you and twine
Myself too close until you be
Burdened by love's sweet helplessness
Like the ill-starred though sturdy tree
Weighted by the slow strangling vine.

So spare your kiss, forego your touch,
Draw your deep lips away from mine :
For I have learned what wisdom saith ;
He whom a woman loves too much
Drinks as it were a drowsy wine
And in the lees of it lurks death.

THE MIRROR

Look!—in the looking-glass we two
Mirrored a moment, I and you,
Dark head and fair, grey eyes and blue;

We kiss, they clasp. Tonight we go
You east, I west, and who can know
When you will once more hold me so?

Yet since our mirrored selves have kissed
Will not these shadow shapes persist,
Ghost lovers in a timeless tryst?

THE WANDERER

IN the early dawn of a morning grey
He took his staff and departed;
He would not bide though I bid him stay
And he carolled a song as he started.

I watched him go from the courtyard gate,—
Leaden the skies hung o'er him!—
Down the path where we'd walked of late,
Till the world spread wide before him.

He carries my heart in the scrip at his side!
My love is the flower in his bonnet,
And his leathern coat,—Ah woe betide!—
Is warm with my kisses on it.

He is bearing the dreams of my soul at his belt
And my prayers within his grey wallet
And all the joy that I've ever felt,—
God knows what may chance to befall it!

He has left me of his but a ragged glove,
So old and worn that he tossed it
Down by the gate;—did you dream, my Love,
What an alms you gave when you lost it?

He has left me naught of mine own but tears
And the hope that I fain would cherish;
The first, I trow, will last me for years,
But alas! if the hope should perish!

HIS LETTERS

I WOULD be free of love that gyves and grieves
So I will burn his letters one by one,
For though these sheets be light as wintered leaves
Yet burden they the heart they lie upon.

His letters, one by one, have fled in flame,
In ashes lie the burning words he writ,
All, save for this last little sheet,—ah shame!
Although I would, I cannot part with it!

HEIGH-HO

HEIGH-HO!

When did love go?

Ask me not, I do not know;—

Last night, today, a week ago!

Who saw him die?

And did he smile or did he sigh?

A tear, a laugh, an epitaph. . . .

Who will his mourner be?

Not I!

LOVE'S GRAVE

DIG me a grave for last year's love,
Bury him dark and deep,
So with the green o' the grass above,
Last year's love may sleep.

At his head and his feet I will plant a red rose,
With harebells and violets blue,—
Everything fragrant and fragile that grows;
But over his bosom,—rue.

HUMORESQUE

HEART, heart, O wherefor so threadbare?
Are there not gems and golden gauds to wear,
And many merry dominoes fit for a carnival,
And scores of silk and satin gowns all hanging
on the wall?

Heart, heart, why goest so forlorn?
Put by your robes of penitence, your grey cloak
dim and worn,
Put on some golden vanity with rosy ribbands
gay,
And then pretend it's festival and play at holiday!

THE RAIN

THE phantom fingers of the rain
Are tapping at my window-pane,
And in the dripping from the leaves,
The running murmur in the eaves,
A whisper sounds; Do you remember
That windy wild day in November,
You two together in the mist
And how he drew you close and kissed?
O wraith hands at my window sill,
O wistful phantom hands, be still!
His cheek against mine warm and wet,
The mist, the kiss . . . could I forget?

RENUNCIATION

I AM aweary, droop thy mantle, Sweet;
Let fall its folds about me for a space,
Bowing thy head, that I who clasp thy feet
May once more touch thy face.

Strong arms that fain would hold me high
Against the world, close me in last caress;
I could not match thy stature,—no, not I!
See, I have striven and won weariness!

O bright brave head! O high and lordly Love!
All can I bear except to see thee low;
Stay not for pity,—I am well enough—
Bend once above me, kiss me and then go.

FOR ANYONE

TRYPTICH IN ASH AND EBONY

LEFT PANEL

THREE CENTURIONS

What have we here today?

A brace of thieves.

In Rome they keep such punishments for slaves.

Freemen or bondsmen all these Jews are knaves.

The third? A crazed fanatic who believes

In some new sect, no one knows what or why.

New Gods are born as fast as old Gods die,

And who can tell the false God from the true?

I saw strange things in the Numidian war.

No God is worth a strong man's dying for!

He came to save the world, so Sextus said.

The world will save itself when he is dead.

And so it will, my friend, when I and you

Like him have died and been forgotten too.

RIGHT PANEL

A GROUP OF SOLDIERS

Give me the coat.

It's mine.

You thief, you lie!

Take it then if you dare!

I had it first.

The greedy vulture plucks men as they die.

You and your vultures, dirty dog, be cursed!

Peace to your quarrel, brawlers, give it here;

Verrus, your knife, we'll cut the cloth in two.

You'll spoil a rare fine bit of weaving if you do!

Leave it to luck then; let the dice decide.

What was that noise?

A woman standing near

Reached through the press and touched the coat
and cried.

Plague take the women! What do they want here?

Back! Give us space.

Ho! Quintus is cross-eyed,

Watch how he squints.

He's muttering a charm.
Look out for Caius, he has crooked dice!
Speak for yourself!

Mercury, jog his arm!
Room for my elbow! Back, you beggar's lice!

CENTRAL PANEL

THE TWO THIEVES

BROTHER, why dost thou hang so high?
The moon was darkened in the sky
And he was rich and very old,
An old bald miser hard as hate,
What use had he for all that gold?
Cursed be the Romans and their law!
I robbed the coffer, gained the gate,—
The sleeping slaves lay close about,—
And suddenly the moon came out
And the watch saw.

And I,—
At the end of the night on the Joppa road
I slit his throat
And so he died;
I wouldn't have killed him but he cried,—
A sickly beggar full of sores
With a few coins in his begging bowl;
I hid his body in a hole,

They tracked me by my bloody coat:
Curse them, these Roman sons of whores!

And what of him who makes the third,
Who hangs and does not speak a word?

Hast thou not heard?
It is the son of Joseph, he
Men call the Christ.

Ho! Jesus, be
Thou Christ or Prophet, speak and loose
These nails that pierce us, set us free!
Or has thy God forsaken thee?
Curse thee, thou saviour of the Jews!

A ROOM

THE ROSEWOOD CABINET

CRYSTALS for scent, silver for snuff and patches,
Carnelian, lacquer, ivory and gilt,
A brooch of filagree, a clasp that matches,
A crucifix, a fan, a dagger's hilt;—
These, treasured once by buried beaux and belles
Of antique elegance, what are they more
Than driftwood, shining pebbles and strange
shells
Left by the Past's spent tide along Time's shore?

A JAPANESE PRINT

A DRAGONFLY

Alighting;

A thin blade of sedge;

Three grey green stalks

Cut by the paper's edge . . .

Straws, meadow grass,

Insects . . .

Why should we lack for art

With such

As texts?

SPINET

IN you frail melodies exist
Like fine rain falling from a mist,—
Imagined fantasies persist.

So your quaint cadences designed
In antique patterns haunt the mind
Like phantoms fugitive as wind.

THE HORSEHAIR SOFA

FOR fleshly penitence devised,
New England's conscience symbolised,
The Ten Commandments on a platter,—
Pantalettes, prayer-books, prunes and prisms,
Longer and shorter Catechisms,—
Morals triumphant over matter!

THE PORTRAIT

So you're the stock from which our race derives,—
You and your three prim unprotesting wives;
Painted by Stuart, A. D. eighteen-two,
He knew the breed and so he painted you.

Well sir, it's plain to see you liked old sherry
And wagged a warm tongue when the hour grew
 merry,
Yet, duly decorous, performed your duty
Toward God, and—kept a keen eye out for female
 beauty.

So passed a long life spent in honest labour
Getting the better of your crafty neighbour.

As to religion, staunchly orthodox,
Taking no chances on hell fire,—sly fox!
In seventy-five you swore yourself a Tory,
In seventy-six, ah, that's another story!
Finding the King's cause isn't worth a groat,
You trim your sails and turn your Tory coat.

By eighteen-twelve you were as firm and fiery
As any patriot. You kept a diary
In which we find recorded acts and attitudes,
Politics, petty plots and pious platitudes.

Four score and ten you died in twenty-seven,
Mourned by six sons;—such are the saints in
Heaven!

THE LITTLE DANCER

I

O LIGHT my feet and light my fancies,
And light as fleet my flitting dances;
I could not sink were worlds to drown:
Come, wind, and take me!
I am thistledown.

II

To each
I speak in different speech,
I give a different gift . . .
To some magic and mysteries,
To one a white moth's kiss,
To others rainbows, dew;
What shall I give to you?

III

Dance with me O lover of mine
And I'll give you a kiss in a cup of wine,
A golden bow and a silver dart
And wild wings to nest within your heart.

IV

What would you have me be?
A dryad who has left her home
In some wind-wakened aspen tree?
A sea-sprite laughing from the foam?
A far cloud drifting in the sky?
A bird alighting on a bough?
A flower, a bee, a dragonfly?
What would you have me now?

V

I wonder if you guessed
Where I was dancing, just a breath ago . . .
Where? Why on heaven's roof,
Across a velvet carpet, warp and woof
Woven of shining strands of azure air;
Against my breast
The wind blew sharp as scimitars
And all about my feet
Like shining petals
Lay lost stars.

VI

Wind of the sky!
Leap down your sunlit stairs
Bright with wild winey airs,
Suddenly, unawares,
Lift me and bear me high!

Wind of the sea;
Fathoms of foam and thunder,
Dirge of the dim sea-wonder
Hidden the deep tides under,
Croon to me, comfort me.

Wind of the night;
Steal shadow-footed, frail,
Wreathed darkly veil on veil,
Lift up your taper pale
Set all the stars alight!

Wind of the dawn!
Under the sky's blue eaves
Shake light in silver sheaves,
Waken the dew-wet leaves,
Darkness is gone!

VII

O blind to beauty,—unconfessed,—
Even to you I bring unguessed
My vision, though you only know
Softness has touched your heart,—
Like snow.

IDYLLE FRANCAISE

WHERE the slow stream winds by the linden
boughs

Grave as a grey owl sits the dim old house,
Here for a whim the two of us must dine,—
Salade, des escargots, with thin red wine,
Coffee and cheese, a sweet *tarte de Lorraine*,—
And we could see through the bright window-pane
The garden like a door-step paradise,—
If God should make His heavens pocket-size!

Talk dragged; I asked; Madame she lives alone?
You smiled; Monsieur plays Darby to her Joan;
Forty years wed, I think you'd find them quaint;
Madame like some aged patient kindly saint,
Patron of housewives, saint of sauce-pans, yet
Feminine, French, incurably coquette!

Let's have them in! We plead; at last they came,
Monsieur decrepit, bleary-eyed and lame,
Madame, deep-bosomed, amply broad of lap,
All softly wrinkled under her frilled cap:

She pours the coffee, wags a gossip's tongue;
Those days of gold, *mon Dieu*, when we were
 young!

None was *si beau, si fort* as Monsieur then!
And now so frail, but headstrong!—ah, these men!
He pays no heed to all her cautioning!
Whereat he shrills; She wants to tie a string
About my leg to keep me like her bird!
Madame sighs, dimples, twitters on; Absurd!
And yet my prayer is that each of us dies
The self-same hour. She smiles into his eyes,
Then lifts the coffee-cups and turning hides
A bright face beautiful as any bride's.

Forty years wed . . . Close to the window-pane
The roses blossomed fresh with the night's rain;
Forty years wed . We two in forty years . . .
And suddenly the roses blurred in tears.

HADLEY MEADOWS

By Hadley elms the wide fields lie;
Here under a New England sky
Ringed by the blue New England hills
Old Europe ploughs and sows and tills.

Yon barefoot daughter of the soil,
Broad-bosomed, bending to the toil,
Just such a stubborn grace is hers
As Millet gave his harvesters!

Patient she spends her old-world strength
Plodding along the furrows length,
Then, at a cry, turns, bares her breast
And sets her suckling babe at rest.

THE FERRIES

San Francisco Bay

THEY shaped us not for man's delight,
Nor moulded us in armoured might,
We were not planned for grace nor speed,
But builded for a people's need.

*The white curled wavelets laugh for glee,
Toss their heads and shout of the sea;
Through gates of gold sifts singing wind;—
Are we so deaf, are we so blind?*

Dull plodding shapes all day we ply
Past where the deep-sea vessels lie,
To and fro between our goals
Carrying so many thousand souls.

*And think you not that we too feel
The prick of the brine beneath the keel?
And think you not within us stirs
The lust of the far sea voyagers?*

Close anchored by the ferry slip,
We pass by many a gallant ship
Back from its wanderings over the world,
Storm-beaten canvas folded and furled.

*What word bring you of alien strands?
What cargoes shipped from fabled lands?
What gossip of the seven seas?
What loot from the Antipodes?*

Dull plodding shapes all day we ply
Past where the deep-sea vessels lie,
To and fro between our goals
Carrying so many thousand souls.

THE LISTENER

THE music will not leave your face alone,
It shapes it as a sculptor carves his stone;
With touches unimaginably deft,
It frets it into haggard arcs of pain
Then curves it back to loveliness again,
It stops and there is only marble left.

THE MARIONETTES

FROM your shy little curls to your prim little toes
Lady, I love you; eyes, ears, chin and nose
Beguile me, bewitch me. So you like the pose?
Have you a heart? Ah, that is the riddle!
I kneel at your feet, I plead. O fiddle!
Your courting is crude, it lacks finesse . . .

Look at the moon, it is made of honey
And shines for true lovers. You digress,
The question is; have you any money?
A handful of silver, more or less;
What does it matter? Kiss me again,
My heart is your own for ever and ever;
We'll go to the priest if you'll only say when.
The next blue moon! But you love me! Never!
Hey, hi diddle, diddle!
You've got it all wrong!
Your bright sword is tin,
Your neck is too long,
Your legs are too thin,

And I don't like the way your hair parts in the
middle!

So your love is a lie!

And I thought you a saint!

But no, you are nothing but pertness and paint.

My heart is broken and I shall die.

Bell, ring his knell; ding, dong! What a jest!

See, he lies dead, his poor heart is broken!

It was only a plaster heart at best.

Now draw the curtain, the piece is all spoken.

CAPRICE

CAPRICE

Is gold;
An orange-colored toy balloon,
The tinkle of a tambourine,
Pollen that makes the brown bee bold,—

Caprice

Is green . . .
A hurdy-gurdy's tangled tune,
The tassel from a jester's shoe,
A faun's dream in mid-afternoon,

Caprice

Is blue . . .
Soap-bubbles blown by Pierrot,
An errant dragonfly or two,
Venetian lanterns hung a-row,—

Caprice

Is you.

THE HOMESTEAD

THIS is my father's father's house;
Within this dooryard each tall tree
That yearns toward heaven with its boughs
Roots deep within the past of me.

The rose-bush by the door is red
With passion of strong lovers gone,
And fragrant of dear women dead
Who travailed that I might be born.

The low porch hung about with vines,
The dim hearth-stone, the wide front door,
Are precious to me as old shrines
Because they loved them long before.

The very earth is dear;—to pass
Down from the door-step to the street
On flaggings rimmed about with grass
And worn by little children's feet!

In hall and chamber, everywhere
Are gracious presences; it seems
Light footsteps linger on the stair,
Soft voices haunt the rafter beams.

But closest, when at dawn I wake
I feel those same shy gentle souls,—
Just so, they watched the slow light break,
Just so, they heard the orioles!

THE LAST DESIRE

THE fields were golden when I died,
For that was in the spring;—
It was so hard to go away
And leave them blossoming!

I craved a little meadow flower
To clasp within my hand;
They looked at me with wistful eyes
And did not understand.

They brought me lilies for my brow
And roses for my breast;
They stripped great gardens bare for me
Of all their loveliest:

Nor ever guessed,—who loved me so!—
That what I craved might be
A common crimson clover-top
To take away with me.

THE DEAD

Do they sleep, the Dead?
Both the evil and the good
In coffins made of cedar wood,
Shrouded, lapped in lead?

Do they sleep, the Dead?
Mid rusted ruin of old wars,
Snapped swords and shattered scimitars?
Sealed in precious perfumes, hid
In Egypt's ageless pyramid;
Far in some strange sun-scourged land,
White bones blenched upon the sand;
Or where wild waves cover them,
Rock and roar a requiem?
Do they sleep, the Dead?

Whether ashes, whether dust,
Whether cased in rot or rust,
Wrapped in white and locked with lead,
Do they sleep, the Dead?

UPSTAIRS

UPSTAIRS they say 'tis sunshine,
Upstairs they say 'tis spring;
And that means honey-locusts
And blue flags blossoming.

They think the spring is not for us,
Upstairs, yet even so
A warmth has thrilled the frozen breasts
Of us who lie below.

THE ANGEL

ONCE it was told me by a man of God
That close to each of us, unguessed,
Serene of brow and radiant of breast
The Angel of God's Presence trod.

Since then at times it seems I am aware,
Passing perhaps along a twilight street,
Of a faint sound like sandalled certain feet
Which echo my own footsteps everywhere.

And once when strong fears shot their shafts at
me

I heard a still clear silver voice which said:
"Oh lonely child of God be comfortéd
For where thou goest, lo I go with thee."

AT BETHANY

WE went in silence, save, a whisper ran
Throughout the people: Who is then this man
And what thing doeth he? This none did know,
Yet still we followed. Whither do we go?
To Lazarus. But he hath lain in shroud
Four days and nights. A murmur shook the
crowd.

Yet still we followed; at the burial place
I, watching, saw upon the Master's face
A strangeness gather,—as a light,—until
Mine eyes went blind a space: the world was still:
Then words of strong command smote the
strained ear,

I saw men shudder: a great tide of fear
Swept us at sight of that I dare not name;
The women flickered like wind-beaten flame;
I turned to flee, made faint with dread and awe,
But in that moment at His side I saw,—
As sun in storm rending the gloom thereof,—
The face of Mary mad with joy and love!

LIFE

LIFE bears great alabaster jars
Of gold and purple gifts,
Flowers, arrows, stars . . .
Kneeling I lift
My arms to her with pleas
And touch
Her knees.
Life smiles and bends,
The gleaming shower descends;
Nay, I am overwhelmed by such
Vast bounty! Cease;
It is too much!

LASSES LOVE

THE WAY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

I PUT my Sunday bonnet on,
With roses 'round the brim,
My buckled shoes, my muslin frock,—
All for the sake of him.

I never looked about the church,
As some I know of do!
But quiet as a Quakeress
Sat all the service through.

The preacher drew his text from Luke;—
Whom went ye out to see?
Old Uncle Eben took a nap
Two seats in front of me;

The doctor's wife was dressed in silk,
The sempstress wore her shawl;
The way of righteousness is hard,—
He wasn't there at all!

THE MESSAGE

IF you should see my dear Love,—
Now mark you how he looks!—
Tell him the spice-bush blossoms
Along the upland brooks;

The plum trees in the valley
Are white, but whiter still
Tell him the wilding cherry
Shakes snow on Thornton Hill;

Tell him the meadow marshes
Are brimmed with cowslip gold,—
And mind you how he answers
When you have told!

THE DAISY

I ASKED a daisy of my Love
And it was very good,
It answered me; He loves you true!
As I had hoped it would.

If I had let the matter rest
Nor asked another one,
I would have had a bit of joy
That night to dream upon;

But though like fallen flakes of snow
The foolish petals dot
The meadow grass, now each declares;
He loves me, loves me not!

THE CALENDAR

THE first time that I saw my Love
It was at Eastertide;
I dreamt a dream on Whitsunday
That I would be a bride;

Mayday he said: "My dear, my own;"—
They tell me men deceive!—
I gave him all my heart in June;
Now 'tis Midsummer Eve;

So fast the summer months come on,
So fast they slip away!
And will he love me Hallowe'en?
And wed me Christmas Day?

IF I WERE A LAD

IF I were a lad
I would run away to sea,
All to let a thousand leagues
Lie 'twixt him and me;

And in an alien country
Across the world from here
I'd dwell, where none would ever speak
Of him who was my Dear;

For oh! my heart is wrung with pain
By that which once was sweet;—
To hear his step at twilight
Echo down the street!

I LOVED IN LAUGHTER

I LOVED in laughter for a space,
Then for a while I loved in pain;
New fancies former moods efface;
Now I am out of love again!

The world is wide, a happy place,
The clouds blow by, blue skies remain;
The winter goes and leaves no trace;
And I—am out of love again!

FOR A CHILD

TREE

I LAY my cheek against your bark,
My arms along a bough,
I pluck a little spray of you
To bind about my brow.

I whisper secret words to you,
You whisper back to me,
I brush your leaves across my lips,
Because I love you, tree.

GOOSE-GIRL

WHITE geese and grey
In a willow wood;
The white geese stray,
The grey are good.

I watch all day,
As a goose-girl should,
White geese and grey
In a willow wood.

FROM THE NURSERY WINDOW

THE Jack-o-lantern moon looks down
Upon the treetops of the town,
And in the branches there are shapes
Of gnomes and dancing bears and apes;
The elm-tree dog sits up and begs,
The plum-tree man with crooked legs
He lifts his cup but never drinks . . .
The grinning moon peeps down and winks,
The goblin in the old pear tree
Sticks out his twisted tongue at me.

COLUMBINES

COLUMBINES are bells
Hung in airy steeples
By the faerie peoples,
Chiming pixie spells,
Tolling elfin knells:
Winds that set the grasses quaking,
Start each tiny clapper shaking;
Winds that blow the leaves a-twinkle
Set each scarlet bloom a-tinkle
Down the ferny dells:
Swaying, swinging,
Chiming, ringing,
Columbines
Are bells!

THE FAIRY FROCK

It's primrose petals for a gown,
For sempstress spiders three,
It's gossamer and thistledown
To make my frock for me.
Then hie thee straight to cobbler toad
Beneath the hornbeam tree
Beyond the turning of the road
To shape my shoes for me.
Then put a dewdrop in my hair,
Fetch me my cobweb shawl,
And call my cricket coach and pair
To drive me to the ball!

THE ELF-CHILD

I SIT within the chimney-nook
And eat my cream and curds;
I do not mind the dame's sour look,
Nor heed her scolding words:

I never rue their bitter speech
Nor brood upon their taunts,
For oh! my heart is out of reach,
Away in faerie haunts.

My heart is on the hill-side
Where the wild thorn-apples grow,
And overhead the skies are wide,
And stars are warm and low:

And when their tongues in sleep are still,—
As soft as mouse on stair,—
I'll out and dance upon the hill
With fireflies in my hair!

THE MOON

THE moon's no bigger than my ball,—
I'm not afraid of her at all!

But yesterday she rose so soon,—
'Twas quite too early for the moon!—
And looked at me without a sound,
So white, so bright, so great, so round,
Above the top of Butter Hill,
That I was almost scared until
She slipped behind the cherry tree;
Out through its leaves she peeped at me,
Then climbed up to its topmost boughs
And crept along the neighbour's house,
Till from the chimney by and by
She stepped right off into the sky;
And all the time, what do you think?
I saw her shrink and shrink and shrink!

Now she's no bigger than my ball,—
I'm not afraid of her at all!

FOR SOME I LOVE

TRUANT

Do you not fear, in those long years to come,
A day on which our voices, weary-dumb,
Shall fail of psalms and we shall turn, replete
Of giving praises though to praise be sweet?
When, surfeiting of splendors, we shall be
Burdened by jasper and chalcedony?
Then, harps discarded, haloes laid away,
Shall we not steal a heavenly holiday?

We two shall creep down the long shining stairs
Softly as thieves,—old Peter unawares
Drowsily nodding his bald saintly pate,—
So tiptoe through a little crack i' the gate
And out! Then unreprieved, unhindered, free
For one day of seraphic truancy!

Tell me, O Playmate, whither do we go?
Back to dear earthly haunts we used to know?
Or, bolder, flash through space, until afar
We touch the threshold of some secret star?

What wild pranks shall we play, what mad deeds
do,

What mischief make amid strange moons, we
two?

Ere, meekly tapping on the sapphire door,
We creep back to God's great gold house once
more?

TO ONE AWAY

For M. D. M.

If I could touch you now
I would kiss your hair's dim bands
And the fine faint lines of your brow
And the faint fine veins of your hands,
Your fingers worn and brown;
The soft folds of your gown,
I would touch them unawares;
And oh, it would be sweet
To hear upon the stairs
The fall of your patient feet.

THE WIND

THE wind creeps down the corridor,
The blind wind taps upon my door,
Pauses and sighs, then taps once more:

He lifts the latch and lets it fall,
Then back again his slow feet crawl
By each blank door along the hall:

And at each door he fumbles past
He tries the latch but finds it fast,—
He tries the little north door last.

But in that room where lately were
Laughter and lilt he hears no stir;
He sighs; I can't awaken her!

Then down the passageway once more
He creeps across the creaking floor,
Pausing to listen at my door.

VERSES FOR A GUEST ROOM

L. S. H.

I HAVE no pomp to offer thee,
Just my heart's hospitality,—
A little beam, but one to light
The lodging of an anchorite.

A slumber deep, a dreamless rest
To thee within this room, Dear Guest!
'Tis sweet to me that thou and I
This night beneath one roof shall lie;
For this I deem,—most dear, my Guest!—
In all the world, or East or West
Where e'er thy tarrying may be,
Blessed is the roof that shelters thee.

TO ANNE

GRIEF cannot ever wither you,
Nor ill fate bitterly subdue,
Nor, hungry heart, will you be left
Ever quite utterly bereft;

For while dews fall and waters flow,
While rainbows arch and west winds blow
You cannot be quite discontent,
For beauty is your nourishment.

TO —

THEY could not shut you out of heaven
Although the sins you'd sinned were seven :

Not all the saints and souls in glory
Could exile you to Purgatory :

For this is true ;—they need your eyes
To light the ways of Paradise.

TO E. A. L.

I

GOD dreamt a dream of stars and dew,
Lest He forget He fashioned you.

He shaped your spirit out of these:—
The dusk o' the dawn and the wind in the trees;
Then with a smile He bade you be
And made life lyrical for me.

II

There is no fear may make thy heart afraid,
Nor doubt by which thy soul could be betrayed,
Nor Death himself shall render thee dismayed;
For though his step be sudden thou shalt rise
And give him greeting in right queenly wise
With gracious lips and sweet unshadowed eyes;
And he that is the Arbiter of All,
Ere giving thee to drink of wine and gall,
Shall place upon thy brow a coronal.

APOTHEOSIS

ALL spring I watched her while a change
Crept over her, her hands would cling
Sharply to mine, her eyes grew strange,
Wide with a wordless questioning;

While on her wistful face I read
A listening look as if she heard
From blossomed branches overhead
The fluting of a phantom bird.

Yet breathed she never word to tell
What wonder she was thinking of,
Till spring's dream changed to summer's spell,
Then spoke at last and said: I love.

AN OLD PHOTOGRAPH

INTO your grave grey-shadowed eyes,
So wide and innocently wise,
I look and ask if any knew
The wild shy gentle heart of you;
For these same solemn eyes confess
The child's eternal loneliness,
The child's pathetic wistful pride,
The child whose childhood is denied.

Could I but take your hand and touch
Your cheek to mine and tell you such
Brave tales as boys love to have told,—
Of Robin Hood and pirate gold,
Of Lancelot and Galahad;
And when the dark came, tuck you tight
Beneath the covers smoothed and white,
And sing to you how angels keep
Their slumber watch, till you should sleep,
And sleeping, smile, O little lad!

But three score years and more have sped,
O grave grey eyes! And you are dead.

TO A. D. M.

WHAT shall I take to make your requiem?
Not the deep tones nor solemn hues of grief,
Nor the sad pageant man shapes out of them,
Rather God's beauty gathered leaf by leaf;
Shadows of far clouds resting on the hills,
Green dawning hope in April frond and shoot,
Fragrance of spring woods that the rain distils,
Orchards at sundown full of scarlet fruit;—
Mist over moist fields brown beneath the plough,
Great oaks in autumn bronze against the blue,
Hips of wild rose aflame on winter's bough,—
These will I take for these belong to you.

THE GARDENER

SOME think
The souls of those who die
Linger a while among those haunts most dear
To them in living;—a last link
That they are slow
To break . . .

I know
Your spirit has been here
Among those roses,
Tending them with understanding touch
And gentle wise caress;
Else why
Should they have bloomed this year
In such
Heart-rending loveliness?

IN MEMORIAM

LIKE flying wings, like soundless waters flowing
Fade the dear dead from out the memory;

This is the changeless truth, Belovéd One, and
knowing

I would pray fate these frail words prove for
thee,—

Struck at white heat of passionate regretting,—
Tablets of bronze, fadeless, beyond forgetting.

HISTORICAL NOTES

THE REGICIDE—Upon the accession of Charles II in 1660, Col. Goffe and Gen. Whalley, members of Cromwell's High Court of Justice, fled to America where they spent the rest of their lives in hiding. It is known that both passed a number of years at Old Hadley concealed in the house of the minister and tradition has it that Whalley died here and was buried in the cellar. The date and place of the death of Goffe who survived him are unknown.

STEPHEN BURROUGHS DEFENDS HIMSELF—Perhaps the most picturesque incident in the career of the notorious Stephen Burroughs was his acceptance under an assumed name, on the strength of a glib tongue and a dozen of his father's old sermons, of the position of temporary minister or "Supplyer" to the dour Scotch-Presbyterian congregation of Pelham, Massachusetts. Becoming suspicious, the elders of the church demanded that he preach a sermon

extempore from a text of their own choosing, an ordeal which his quick wit enabled him to turn to his credit and their confusion.

DAN KELLOG ENTERTAINS SHAY'S ARMY—The old house with its secret staircase where Kellog hid to escape the attention of zealous patriots still stands between Amherst and Pelham. Here in 1787 after Shay's army of two thousand malcontents from Western Massachusetts had suffered their first discomfiture at the hands of the militia a number of that bold band stopped for refreshment, leaving their names scrawled on the attic walls as testimony.



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